

Four Tips for Star Measures Success

Medicine Man Pharmacies



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Pharmacy Name:

Medicine Man

Community Type:

Primarily urban to suburban.

Location Setting:

One freestanding store and two grocery store locations.

Patient Base:

At least 22% of patients are Medicare Part D.

Primary Objective:

Simplifying medication adherence across three pharmacy locations with limited resources.

Did You Know?

You can learn more about Star Ratings, MTM and independent pharmacy at KnowledgeDriven.com.

The goal of CMS' Star Ratings program is to improve quality of care by rewarding health plans for care that costs the healthcare system less. And since medication adherence carries a cost of nearly \$300 billion annually, it's no surprise that improving adherence is not only a big step in improving patient health, but also in improving Star Ratings.

But improving adherence — and thereby performance on CMS Star Measures — can be a difficult task to tackle on the pharmacy level. Where do you start? What tools do you use? Barry Feely, *Good Neighbor Pharmacy* customer and owner of three pharmacies in Northern Idaho, has found Star Measures success by simplifying adherence for his patients. And along with staff pharmacist Korey Kreider, he's sharing four tips for managing adherence in the community pharmacy setting.

#1 Approach non-adherent patients with solutions in mind.

Korey has been managing the Medication Therapy Management (MTM) work for Medicine Man's three locations since he was a fourth-year pharmacy student doing rotations. During that time, he has learned what works — and what doesn't — when it comes to addressing adherence issues with patients. "There are several things you want to do to get the patient to talk about their problems without actually going out and saying, 'hey, you're not taking this right' or 'you're doing this wrong,'" Korey says. "You want to let them show you what's going wrong, instead of pointing it out."

In addition, it's important to offer solutions that help patients overcome adherence barriers. Medicine Man offers not only automatic refills and text message reminders, but also unit dose packaging via their MedPax adherence system. These solutions leave patients with no excuses for not taking — and refilling — medications as prescribed.



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#2 Create a workflow that mitigates challenges.

Perhaps the most substantial element in Star Ratings success is integrating MTM into the pharmacy workflow. And the biggest part of making a workflow change work is anticipating challenges before they arise. At Medicine Man, Korey evaluates the GNP InSite reports from a central computer connection against pharmacy records at all three stores and flags at-risk patients for MTM consultations. Then, he either calls the patient himself for a one-on-one to talk about adherence issues, suggesting Medicine Man's Rx synchronization services or even better, their MedPax medication adherence packaging. If the patient can not be reached, Korey communicates with the pharmacists at each location to ensure the communication is offered when a patient picks up prescriptions. In some cases, a pharmacist will travel to the patient's home to conduct the MTM session. This holistic integration of MTM consultations into workflow allows the pharmacy to review cases as soon as they're assigned, resulting in 100 percent completion rate. This data-mining approach has resulted in significant strides for the stores, as nearly 100 patients have been enrolled in the MedPax program, and these patients have reached 100 percent adherence. Each month, Korey and his team call patients several days in advance of scheduled synchronized or MedPax refills to ensure nothing has changed or may be changing with their medications. And although the MedPax program is offered at a reasonably small fee of \$9.99 per month, Medicine Man will waive this fee when the extra cost presents a potential barrier to using this service. They have engaged their entire pharmacy staff and have created standard operating procedures for technicians to make phone calls to patients. The team uses Outlook to make pertinent notes, and to know which patients are due for refills and on what day. This allows the pharmacy to control workflow and staffing more accurately based on the forecasted volume.

#3 Detail your doctors.

Provider partnerships with the pharmacy's efforts are critical to adherence success. That's why the Medicine Man team makes a concerted effort to ensure physicians in their area are aware of the MedPax offering. "By reaching out to doctors, we can possibly gain access to a customer base who are not aware of our pharmacies and what we do," Korey says. In fact, by working with a local doctor, Korey and team were able to reduce one patient's medication adherence dramatically by switching her 23 different medications to the MedPax system. Prescriber relationships are also key to the high-risk medication Star Measure. The message is how these processes benefit the patient overall.

#4 Offer education.

Medicine Man offers free diabetes education as a way to ensure their patient base is not only taking medication appropriately, but also that patients are taking care of themselves in terms of diet and lifestyle. This helps the stores attract new patients — and potentially benefits the MedPax program. Education provides the how and the why for patients.

Taking this multi-dimensional approach to managing adherence has allowed all three Medicine Man stores to enhance the level of care they provide to the community while also maintaining impressive Star Ratings. In addition, Korey says the MedPax program has actually boosted front-end sales, as the packaging process can include supplements, vitamins and other OTC products. And with the aggressive goal of adding 30-40 new MedPax patients and 10-20 prescriber relationships in 2015, Medicine Man's success is sure to continue.